

REMARKS

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 1, 4, 11, 14 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by US 5069340 ('340 patent).

Claims 2, 5-7, 10, 16, 18-21, 24, 25 and 29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the '340 patent in view of US 5775514 ('514 patent).

Claims 8, 9, 12, 13, 22, 23, 26, 27, 31, 32 and 34-42 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the references as applied to claims 1 and 6 above, and further in view of US 5803691 ('690 patent).

Claims 3, 17, 30 and 33 are indicated as allowable.

Summary of the Response to the Office Action

Claims 3-6, 11, 12, 14, 17-20, 25, 26, 28 and 33-40 are amended.

Claims 1, 2, 16, 31, 32 and 42 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

New claims 43-50 are added.

Accordingly, claims 3-15, 17-30, 33-41 and 43-50 remain pending for consideration.

The Rejections of Claims 1, 2, 16, 31, 32 and 42

Applicant has canceled claims 1, 2, 16, 31, 32 and 42 without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicant does not, however, acquiesce in the Examiner's rejections of claims. Rather, these claims are canceled for purposes of expediting allowance of the claims indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

Allowable Claims

Claims 3, 17 and 33 are indicated as containing allowable subject matter, but stand objected to as depending from rejected parent claim(s). Applicant has rewritten claims 3, 17 and 33 in independent claim format. Accordingly, allowance of claims 3, 17 and 33 is earnestly solicited.

Amendments to Dependant Claims

Claims 4-6, 11, 12, 14, 18-20, 25, 26, 28 and 34-40 are amended to depend from allowable claims 3, 17, and 33, respectively, and these claims recite limitations that further distinguish the invention from the art of record. For either of these reasons, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a), and allowance of claims 4-6, 11, 12, 14, 18-20, 25, 26 and 34-40.

New Claims 43-50

Claims 43-50 are directed to a different aspect of the invention which is patentably distinct from the art of record. Support for new claims 43-50 is provided at, for example, pages 4-6 and Figs. 2, 3 and 5 of Applicant's specification as originally filed. Allowance of claims 43-50 is earnestly solicited.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and the timely allowance of the pending claims. **Should the Examiner feel that there remains any matters outstanding before a Notice of Allowance may issue, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at 202-739-5772.**

If there are any other fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-0310. If a fee is required for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 not accounted for above, such an extension is requested and the fee should also be charged to our Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

MORGAN, LEWIS & BOCKIUS LLP

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By: 

James L. Reed
Registration No. 43,877

CUSTOMER NO. 09629

Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP
1111 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004
Tel. (202) 739-3000
Fax. (202) 739-3001